

January 26, 2005

Dear Friend,

As you may know, the 109th Congress reconvened on January 4th, 2005. From the President's proposal to privatize Social Security, to tax reform, to the brave men and women who are serving in hostile locations throughout the world, there is no shortage of important issues that we will be considering as the year progresses. Although it may not get the attention in Washington that it deserves, one issue of particular importance to New Mexico that I plan to continue focusing on during the 109th Congress is to increase our nation's commitment to preventive health care and health promotion programs.

The national investment in prevention is currently estimated to be less than 5 percent of annual health care costs despite strong evidence that prevention can be cost-effective and helps people enhance the quality of their lives. It is a fact that adaptable lifestyle factors such as smoking, sedentary lifestyle, poor nutrition, unmanaged stress, and obesity account for approximately half of premature deaths in the United States. Moreover, spending on chronic diseases related to lifestyle and other preventable diseases account for an estimated 70 percent of total health care spending.

With a greater focus on prevention, we will be able to greatly reduce the number of individuals who suffer from all types of ailments including diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and strokes, just to name a few areas where preventive health care could make a significant impact.

On January 19th, 2005, I had the honor of addressing the New Mexico State Legislature. Preventive health care and health promotion programs was the focus of my address. This is an issue that both state and federal officials must devote greater attention and resources to help stem the rising tide of obesity and diabetes. Please [click here](#) to read the complete text of my speech.

Very Truly Yours,

Tom Udall
Member of Congress